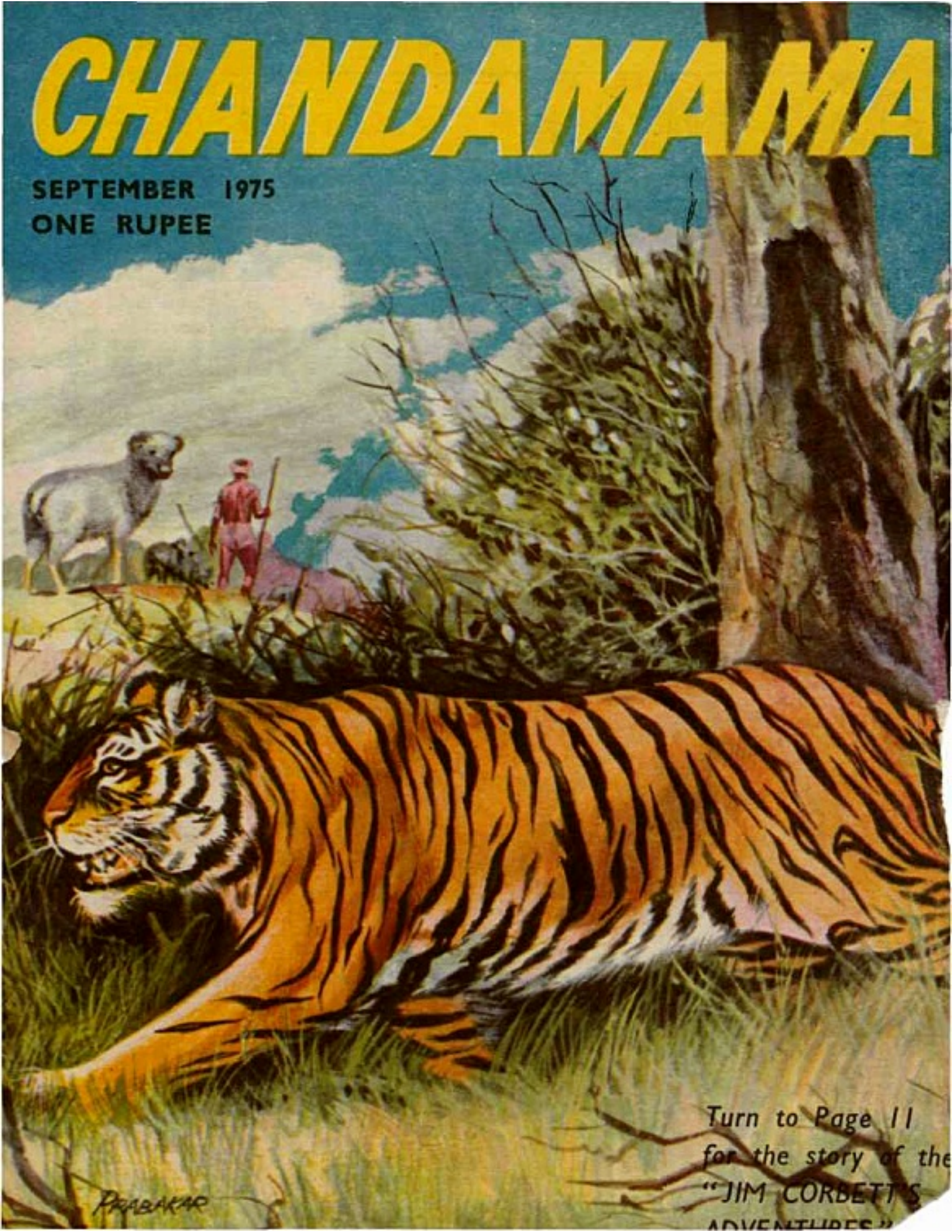


CHANDAMAMA

SEPTEMBER 1975

ONE RUPEE



Turn to Page 11
for the story of the
"JIM CORBETT'S
ADVENTURES"

PRABHAKAR



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CORBETT — HUNTER WITH A DIFFERENCE

"It was my first day in India. I went down into a river for a dip. Suddenly I saw a huge tiger advancing at me from the high bank. I just splashed water at him and he turned tail and fled!" Reminisced one of the two retired officers of the East India Company, when back at home, before an admiring gathering of friends.

Seeing that his companion was about to steal the show, the other officer observed, "My friend speaks the truth, for, just then I happened to pass by. I commanded the tiger to halt and stroked his moustache and, indeed, they were wet!"...

This is obviously a tall tale, but it conveys the spirit of the yarns spinned about India, the land of tigers, elephants and pythons, by the early colonialists. And for a very long time it was deemed a must for every member of the ruling race to go on a hunting spree encouraged and assisted by the princes of India. Often what was done in such expeditions was brutal—with the blood of thousands of birds and beasts shed just for sport!

Jim Corbett, an Englishman born in India and in deeply love with India, whose birth centenary is being observed this year, contributed most to change the concept of shikar. For him it was a mission to save people from tigers who turned man-eaters. He killed 45 of them who had claimed about 4,000 human lives. And he drove home the point that all tigers were not man-eaters and hence they should not be destroyed. A writer of great gift, his works vibrate with life—the colourful life of ordinary folks and extraordinary animals!

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PLUS 8 COMPLETE STORIES
BESIDES OTHER REGULAR FEATURES

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. Ganesh Mukherjee



Mr. Praad

- * These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, or several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.
- * Rs. 20 will be awarded as prize for the best caption. Remember, your entry must reach us by 30th **SEPTEMBER**
- * Winning captions will be announced in **NOVEMBER** issue
- * Write your entry on a **POST CARD**, specify the month, give your full name address, age and post to : **PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST, CHANDAMAMA MAGAZINE, MADRAS - 600 026**

Result of Photo Caption Contest held in July Issue

The prize is awarded to : Miss S. Asifa Taj,
D/o. Mr. S. Murthaza, A.E.N./S. Rly., 41, Railway
Quarters, GADAG, Karnataka.

Winning Entry — 'Balancing Stride' — 'Gallanting Pride'

NEWS FOR YOU....

Back to the Epic Weapons!

In the epics we read of heroes and gods with supernatural powers creating storms or causing thunders and applying them against their enemies. Now, some experts have prophesied of the use of such phenomena in the wars of the future. Since man is now capable of changing the weather, it would not take him long to do so in an intensified manner, causing natural havoc unnaturally!

Language of the Horse

Forty years of deep study has enabled Henry Blake of England to compile a dictionary of the language of the horse. What does a horse intend to say when it breathes softly looking at you or when it kicks in a certain manner? Each such gesture of the animal has a specific meaning. There are 30 ways in which a horse can give vent to a single emotion, namely, love!

Art for Art's Sake—theft for?

You know the popular saying, "Art for Art's sake." But when somebody steals a famous art work, he of course does it for profit's sake.

But the biggest art-theft known so far was perhaps for art-theft's sake, not for profit. Sir Alfred Beit of Ireland lost 19 paintings, valued at \$20,000,000 from his collection, last year. They had been stolen by an educated young lady, Dr. Rose Dugdale. They have been recovered, luckily!

....AND SOME VIEWS TOO

A Guide to 20th Century Thoughts on Peace

Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.

—Albert Einstein

War is an invention of the human mind. The human mind can invent peace with justice.

—Norman Cousins

Those who can win a war well can rarely make a good peace and those who could make a good peace would never have won the war.

—Winston Churchill

Be content and live within your heart—deep inside—it is the only way to have Peace...

The earth will enjoy a lasting and living peace only when men understand that they must be truthful and sincere even in their international dealings...

Peace, peace over all earth. Not the peace of an Inconscient sleep or of a self-satisfied inertia, not the peace of a self-forgetful ignorance and an obscure and heavy indifference; but the peace of the omnipotent force, the peace of a perfect communion, the peace of an integral awakening, of the disappearance of all limitation and all darkness.

—The Mother

[The thoughts given in our last issue were on Idealism and not on Freedom. The error is regretted.]



THE STALE FOOD

Once upon a time there was a king who was a great philanthrope. He had hardly any thought excepting the good of his people. Often he roamed about throughout the land in disguise in order to observe the condition of his subjects.

In his kingdom lived a certain wealthy man who was extremely greedy and selfish. He never gave a pie to the needy nor contributed to any good cause. His wife sometimes managed to help the poor when he was away from home.

It was the wealthy man's birthday. His wife had prepared a number of delicious dishes for him. He ate them with great relish.

Just then a beggar shouted at their door, "I am dying of hunger. Will you give me a handful of rice?"

The wealthy man heard the cry, but said nothing. His wife did not dare to give anything to the beggar in his presence. She, however, hoped that her husband would certainly instruct her to give something to the beggar that particular day since that was his happy birthday.

The beggar kept on crying for long. But the rich man did not even show that he had heard the cries.

At last the beggar shouted, "Well, must I then go away hungry?" At that the wife

turned to look at the door and said, "Yes. We have nothing to offer you. My husband is eating stale food, what was surplus from yesterday's!"

It so happened that the king who was passing by in disguise heard all this. Through the window he could see that the rich man was enjoying a number of fresh dishes. How then did his wife utter such a blatant lie? She could certainly have asked the beggar to come later!

The king returned to his palace, pensive. Next day an officer came to the wealthy man's house and told him that the king had summoned his wife. The man, panic-struck, accompanied his wife to the court.

The king asked the lady, "Yesterday, while you were serving your husband with luxu-

rious dishes, you told a beggar that your husband was taking stale food, surplus from the day before. How could you say such a lie?"

The lady smiled melancholy and said, "My lord! What I meant was, my husband was eating the fruit of such good deeds which he had performed in his past life. The luxury he enjoyed could not be the outcome of his deeds of this life, for, he has done nothing good in this life! My lord, you have to interpret my words in this light."

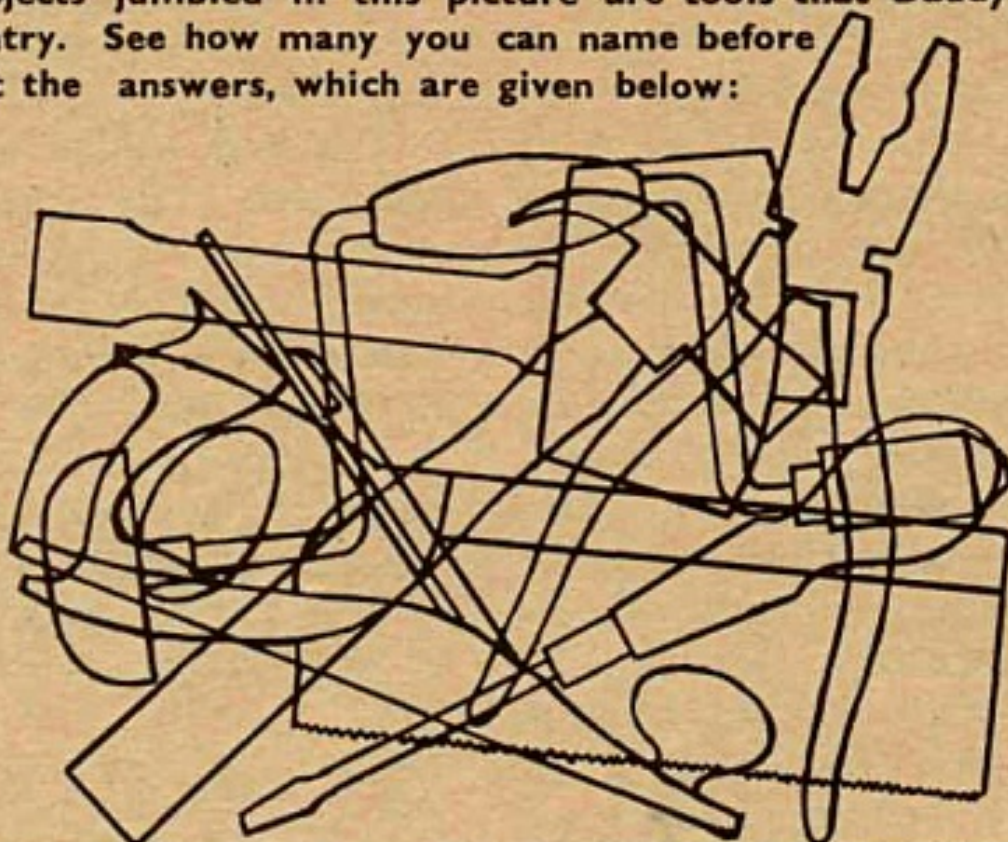
The king was amazed at the wisdom of the lady. He rewarded her with a costly silk saree and chided her husband for his stingy conduct. It was a good lesson to the wealthy man. Thereafter he began to show consideration to others.



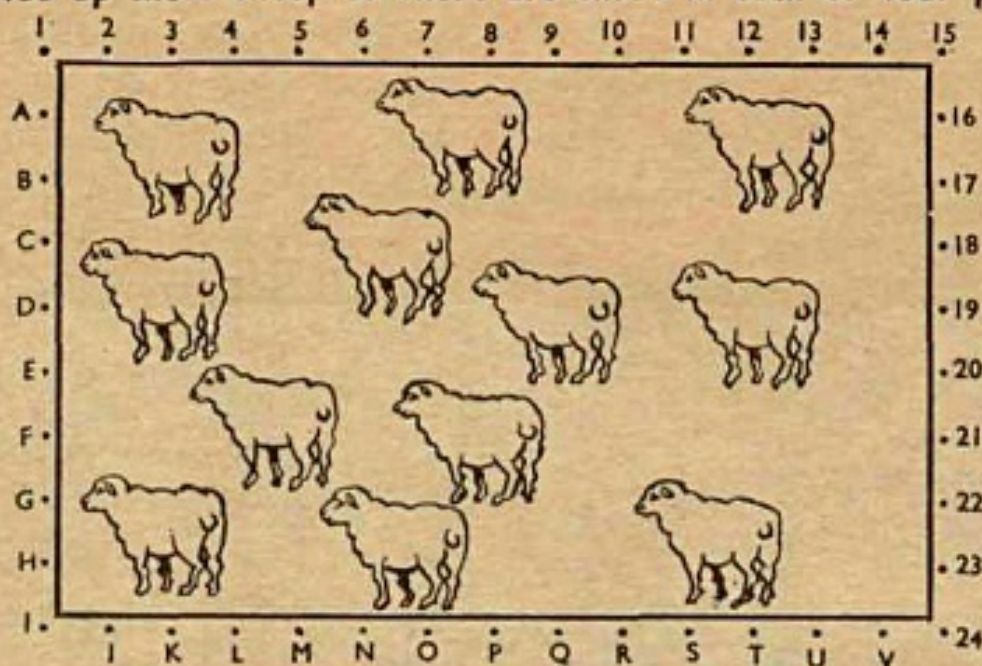
PUZZLE TIME

All the objects jumbled in this picture are tools that Daddy uses for carpentry. See how many you can name before looking at the answers, which are given below:

1



2 By drawing two straight lines, from dot to dot, see if you can divide up these sheep so there are three in each of four pens.



2 The lines go from 10 to L and B to 23

ANSWERS: 1 PLIERS, MALLET, HAMMER, BRACE, SAW,
PLANE and SCREWDRIVER



JIM CORBETT'S ADVENTURES

Over the hills the sun shone bright. A party of twenty men trudged along the hard mountain way, talking and singing, towards Champawat bazaar in Naini Tal district. On both sides of the road stretched acres of bushes and shrubs, spread up and down the hills.

"I am killed! Save me, O save me!" Suddenly this shrill cry of utter panic tore through the atmosphere. The party stopped, their eyes popped out and mouths agape. Then, huddled together, they saw a large tiger passing by, only fifty yards from them, carrying a woman, holding her by her back, her legs and hair trailing on the ground.

The woman cried and cried. Her voice echoed and re-echoed

in the hills and slowly faded and was heard no more after a while. But none dared to do anything. "What can men do when they are afraid?" one of them explained afterwards.

This is how the tiger—it was in fact a tigress—notorious as the Champawat man-eater, behaved in the broad daylight. You can imagine what the situation would be once the sun went down. Not a soul stirred out of the huts. Terror reigned supreme over the region.

The audacious tigress did not care whether it was day or night. She sprang upon sheep and cattle and dragged away one from the herd and sometimes preferred the shepherd to the animal.

She had killed two hundred men and women in Nepal before she appeared in the

Kumaon region where, during a period of four years, she had taken two hundred and thirty-four lives more. An Englishman, whom the Government considered the greatest shikari of the time, had failed to bag her. Naturally, when Jim Corbett, an officer in the military, appeared on the scene, he knew that he was taking up a formidable challenge.

He had to labour days on end tracking the man-eater. At last, knowing for certain that the man-eater stayed in a particular area, he arranged for a beat. That is to say, about three hundred men, some of them with fire-arms and others with whatever weapon at their disposal, skirted the area and started firing, drumming and shouting. They made a ring with one opening, where Corbett waited, ready with his gun.

The great din and hullabaloo duly broke out. As expected, the angry tigress came straight towards the spot where Corbett had taken position.

Corbett would have brought her down in an easy way, but one of his companions, the local Tahsildar, fired two shots untimely and impatiently which missed her and made her retreat.

Seeing that the long awaited enemy was about to escape, Corbett fired twice. The shots injured her, but could not kill her. Unless Corbett would fire another shot and finish her, she would naturally charge at him. But to his horror, Corbett found that he had run out of bullets!

It was his sheer good luck that the tigress, instead of charging at him, retired into a bush, perhaps to recover a bit. Corbett shouted at the Tahsildar to hurry up with his gun. But the brave lieutenant shouted back that his feet had become immobile!

There was no time to lose. Corbett ran to the Tahsildar,



fetches the gun and about to fire, saw that the gun was a damaged one! It was extremely risky to fire from that. But he took the risk and put an end to the ferocious tigress in time.

Great was the joy of the people. They carried the dead tigress in a procession through the nearby villages so that their womenfolk and children could believe that the great menace had really met her end.

On his way back to his headquarters with the tigress's skin, Corbett stopped at a small village named Pali. He knew that in that village lived a poor woman whose sister was dragged away by the tigress

while she looked on.

In a terrific feat of shock, she lost her power of speech and had remained dumb since.

Corbett found out the woman and quietly lay the tigress's skin before her. The woman understood the significance instantly, for, everybody in the area knew about Corbett's mission. Then something most unexpected happened. She called out for her husband and others to come hurrying to see "what the sahib had brought!" Thus, she got back her power of speech as suddenly as she had lost it.

Corbett had to tackle many more man-eaters in the course of years. He had to undertake



strenuous journeys up and down the hills and pushing through the forests. He was obliged to sit nights on end on uncomfortable machans or branches of trees, looking for the man-eaters, when nobody would be around to talk to or to come to his rescue if needed. The trees on which he took position sometimes swayed like reeds in violent mountain breeze; sometimes he was thoroughly soaked in rain and his limbs stiffened in hailstorm. But he never gave up.

Of Corbett's many thrilling adventures one that comes easily to our mind is his long-drawn battle against the leopard of Rudraprayag, "the most famous man-eating leopard of all time." According to Government records, the leopard had killed one hundred and twenty-five men and women before Corbett vanquished it. Thousands of people trek to the holy shrines of Badrinath and Kedar-nath every year through Rudraprayag where some of them would always rest for a night. Several of them were killed by the leopard over the years. And it had become so audacious that it would select a house, claw and pull the wooden

planks or dig through if it was an earthen wall and claim a life. Once it broke open the door of a room and passed through forty goats and dragged away a sleeping boy. There were cases of its killing the only son or only daughter of a family, causing irreparable tragedy.

All attempts to kill it proved futile. It could tear through traps and could digest as deadly a poison as cyanide which was planted in the flesh of its preys. It would creep into villages in daylight, but with such stealth that even a pye-dog would not smell it. People came to believe that it was an evil-spirit who assumed the form of a leopard and hence can never be destroyed.

Corbett had to pass many hard days trying to get at the leopard. Once while he was asleep under a tent, the leopard climbed a tree and was about to pounce on him and his men when one of them shouted and it gave up.

As days passed, the leopard became more famous and more dreaded. Tens of thousands of pilgrims spread hair-raising tales about it; newspapers in India and abroad circulated its bloody

deeds and accused the Government for its failure to destroy the big cat.

But the Government could hardly do anything better than commissioning Corbett to do the job. And Corbett, no doubt, was doing his best. Let us see, in his own words, how he passed the hours of his vigil: "In the deep ravine there was absolute silence. The hot sun of the past few days had made the dead leaves on the bank on which I was sitting as dry as tinder. This was very reassuring, for it was now dark and whereas previously I had depended on my eyes for protection I now had to depend on my ears, and with thumb on the button of the torch and finger on trigger I was prepared to shoot in any direction in which I heard the slightest sound."

But many a waiting ended in vain. Once, by imitating the call of a she-leopard, he was successfully drawing the man-eater into the range of his gun when suddenly a real she-leopard diverted its course by her calls from a distance.

Another time the leopard had killed a small boy, but had left the greater part of his body in the outskirts of the village.

Knowing that the creature would come to eat the victim again the next night, Corbett waited with his gun pointed at the spot. But the man-eater, on its way there, was challenged by a local leopard and then ensued a terrible fight between the two and both receded into the forest, fighting.

At last, after a deep study of the leopard's movements and guessing that it would take to a certain route within a certain period, Corbett kept sitting on a tree for nights, fastening a goat to a pole below.

It was the eleventh night. In the morning a tired Corbett was to leave the place, accepting defeat. But his patience paid. The leopard appeared and just when it was about to spring on the goat, Corbett fired.

All was dark then. It was only at the dawn that Corbett knew that the single shot and achieved the end. The man-eater of Rudraprayag lay dead. The little goat was happily grazing.

At Rudraprayag an annual festival was held for many years to commemorate the end of the man-eater. Corbett is still a household name in large areas at the foot of the Himalayas.

ANNIE BESANT

You for other sow the grain;
Yours the tears of ripening rain;
Theirs the smiling harvest gain.
You have soul enough for seven;
Life enough the earth to leaven;
Love enough to create Heaven.
One of God's own faithful few;
Whilst unknowing it are you;
Annie Besant, bravely true.

This rare tribute to Annie Besant was paid by an English poet, Gerald Massey.

No British woman had ever been so much a part and leader of India as Annie Besant. Born in London in 1847, daughter of W.P. Wood, Annie had married Rev. Frank Besant, a devoted Christian, and had intended to dedicate herself to a religious way of life. She certainly did that, but not in the conventional way. Her quest after truth made her a restless seeker and soon she came in contact with Madame Helena P. Blavatsky, the leader of the famous Theosophical Society.

The Theosophical Society, founded by Madame Blavatsky and Col. H. S. Olcott in America in 1875, had soon become a world-wide movement.

They had the lofty aims of promoting the universal brotherhood of humanity, to encourage a deep study of the world's religions and philosophies, and to carry on research into the hidden powers which lie in life and matter, a field of knowledge known as occultism.

Annie Besant's intuitions told her that India, which was the repository of the great spiritual wisdom of the ages, was her real home. She arrived in India where her first major activity was the founding of the Central Hindu College at Benares.

In 1907 she became the president of the Theosophical Society, at the death of its founder-president, Col. Olcott. The responsibility was great. But her capacity was even greater. While managing on one hand the business of this growing world-wide organisation, she felt that her immediate field of work was India and jumped into the Indian social and political arena springing a surprise.

But the surprise of the people was soon changed into affection

and admiration. By the dint of her sincerity, she soon made herself acceptable as a natural leader of an educated section of the Indian people. India being then ruled by the British, needless to say, her first urge was to win as much freedom as possible for India. She established an association named the Indian Home Rule League in 1916. With Bal Gangadhar Tilak she went to England and argued with the British leaders about the justification of giving India rights to rule herself. In 1917 she presided over the Indian National Congress and that was a rare honour

and proof of the trust India had in her.

It was Mrs. Besant's desire to broaden the scope of the National Congress. She wanted that people of all ideologies, if they believed in achieving *Swaraj*, should find a place in the Congress. What she said in Belgaun Congress of 1924 records her ideal and gives us some idea of her style of appeal:

"To me freedom of speech, freedom of expression, is so vital a part in the country's life, that even for my worst enemy I would claim freedom of speech, for, I believe, in the old words that 'Truth only con-



quers and not falsehood.' Let everyone come before you and put his case and then the whole country can speak to Britain and say with one voice 'We demand Swaraj'."

Mrs. Besant was a convincing speaker. She not only contributed immensely to the awakening in India, but also championed her cause in Britain. A versatile writer, she wrote about 500 books and pamphlets.

Thus, till her death in 1933, she gave all her time to two great causes, the cause of India

through her participation in India's struggle for freedom (for which she had once had to be interned by the government), and the cause of humanity through her leadership of the Theosophical movement.

The headquarters of the international Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras, bears the glowing memory of this great woman besides several other institutions scattered all over the country marked with the stamp of her association.

WONDER WITH COLOURS





THE GRAND REVENGE

It happened hundreds of years ago. The northern kingdoms of India were then often attacked by invaders from outside. The battles were fierce and brutal. Sometimes the invaders destroyed the Indian forts, sometimes they were repulsed.

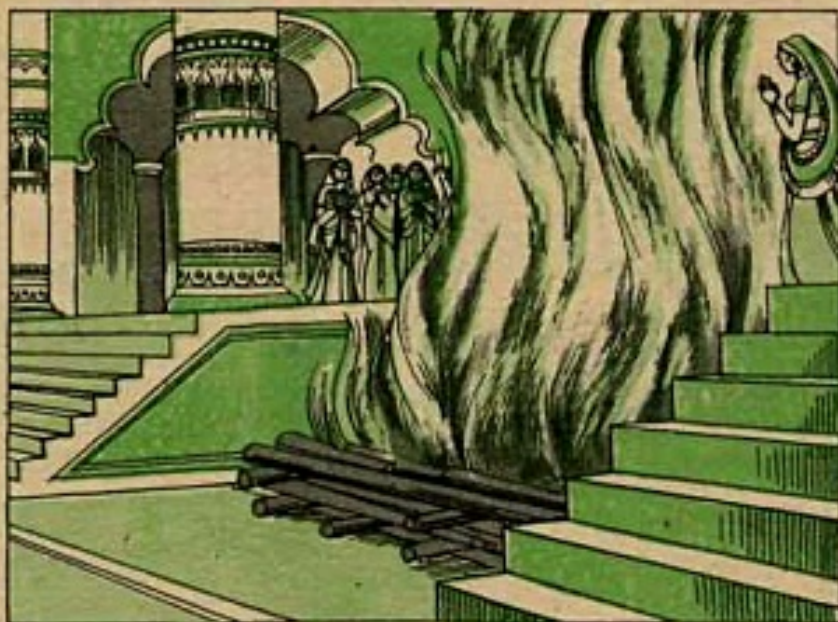
Al Hazaz ruled Turkey and Iran as the deputy of the Caliph of Bagdad. Several times he sent his soldiers to plunder Sind, then ruled by King Dahir, but the invaders were defeated.





At last, Al Hazaz's son-in-law, Mohammad Kasim, became the commander of his army. The young man was daring and clever. After a long-drawn battle he succeeded in destroying the fort of the King of Sind.

When the king and the princes were killed by the invaders, the queen and her daughters-in-law lit a fire and sacrificed themselves.



Two beautiful daughters of the king, however, were captured by Kasim, before they could throw themselves into the fire.

The commander, after ransacking the king's treasure, began his homeward journey. He carried the two captive princesses along with him. He was happy and proud.



Kasim, the commander, presented the princesses to his father-in-law, Al Hazaz, who sent them to his master, the Caliph. The Caliph was charmed by their beauty. He kept them in his harem, to marry them at a later date, and rewarded the commander with the governorship of a distant province.

Some time passed. The Caliph then joyfully declared that he would now marry the princesses from Hindustan! But the princesses said, "O Caliph! Your commander had already married us on our way here. Is this the custom in your land to present one's wives to one's master?"





The furious Caliph at once despatched his soldiers to the distant town where the commander lived as a governor. "I want to see him—not alive, but dead!" was his command.

The command was duly carried out. But as soon as the deadbody of Kasim was brought before the Caliph, the princesses declared, "O Caliph! Your commander was innocent. He had never touched us! We have avenged our father's murder and the destruction of his dynasty!"



Thus deceived, the Caliph shrieked and cried and put the princesses to death. But the princesses had no regrets at all. The Caliph did not live long. He died repenting for murdering his faithful commander, Kasim





RICH WITH ADVICES

Ramoo was too eager to separate from his elder brother, Hari, after their father's death. But Hari was very reluctant to allow the separation. Ramoo was extremely naive and that is why their father, while dying, had urged upon Hari never to forsake him.

But some young men of the village who had become Ramoo's chums always inspired him to become independent of his brother. They knew how innocent Ramoo was and so they looked forward to exploiting him when he would possess some property.

Hari did not like to displease his younger brother whom he

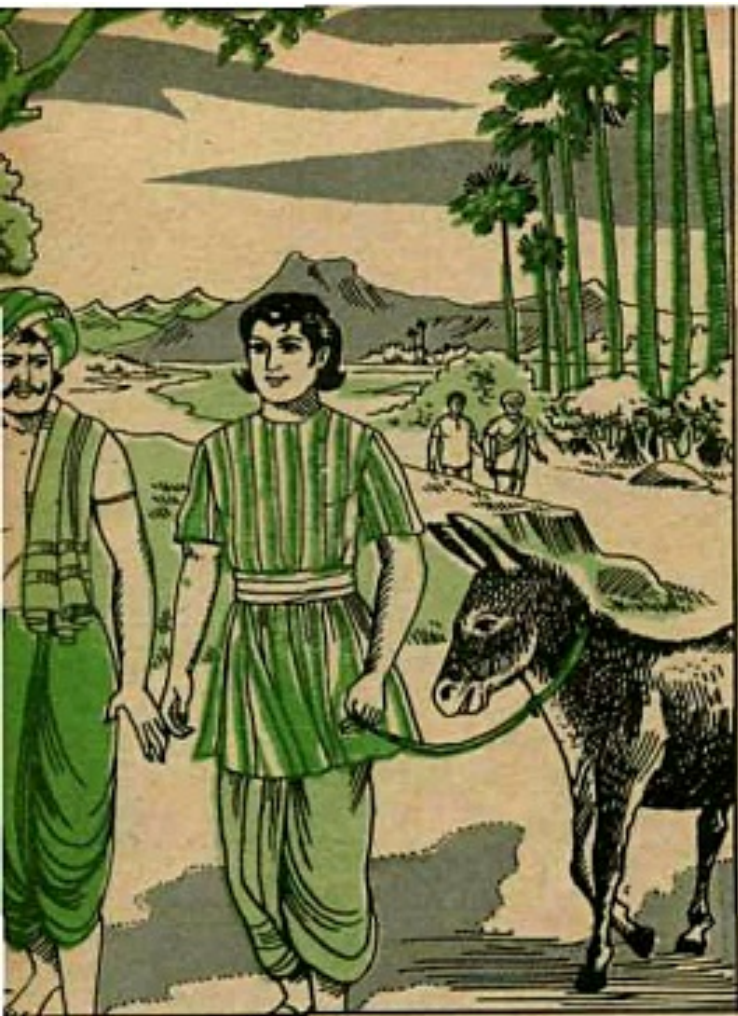
really loved. He called him to his side one day and said, "Ramoo! I have no objection to give you your share of the property. But you must first make sure that you can manage it all right."

"How to make sure?" asked Ramoo.

"Begin doing a little bit of worldly works. When you will feel satisfied yourself that you are doing them successfully, you can separate from me," replied Hari.

"That is a good idea. Now, tell me what I should do to begin with," asked Ramoo with confidence.

"Take a donkey for selling



it in the market. Try to live with the sale-proceed for a week, staying in that solitary house of ours in the fields," proposed Hari.

"That is so easy!" replied Ramoo joyously.

That was the day for the weekly market which was held five miles away. Hari gave Ramoo a donkey and Ramoo dragged the animal along with him, merrily whistling.

A stranger met him on the way and said that he was also going to the market. Ramoo was happy to get a companion. The stranger praised Ramoo's shirt, his hair-style and his sweet

figure and that kept Ramoo quite engrossed in the conversation. After a while the stranger took to another road, saying that he remembered of some urgent business elsewhere.

After the stranger departed, Ramoo looked back and, to his utter bewilderment, found that what he dragged was not the donkey, but a young man.

"What happened to my donkey?" he stammered out.

The young man, with folded hands, said, "Sir! Five years ago I had been turned into that donkey by my wife who knows witchcraft, because I beat her. Later, taking pity on me, she had said that a time would come when a very great soul would drag me to the market. Only then I would get back my human form."

"I see!" observed Ramoo as he freed the young man from the rope, "Well, then, go back to your wife and be careful in your dealing with her."

"Thank you, Sir. And let me give you a parting advice: Never marry a witch," said the young man and disappeared with a few bounces.

Ramoo did not proceed towards the market any more. He returned to his village, but

since Hari had advised him to live for a week in their solitary house, he straight went there instead of going home.

He passed the night somehow. But when it was morning, hunger compelled him to rush home. After gobbling up a heavy breakfast, he narrated his strange experience to Hari and said, "Although I could not sell the donkey, I am richer by an advice: I will never marry a witch!"

"Hm!" was all Hari uttered.

A week passed. The market day came again. Hari gave a hundred rupees to Ramoo and asked him to buy a horse.

Hari reached the market and pushed his way into the area where the animal fair was held. Soon he found his old donkey waiting to be sold. Surprised, he went near it and patted it and said, "You unfortunate lad, you picked up a quarrel with your wife again and she turned you into a donkey again, is that so? But I can't buy you again, for, my brother has instructed me to buy a horse with a hundred rupees."

The wicked people who had stolen his donkey last time immediately surrounded Ramoo and their leader said, "Will



you like to take home a horse worth a thousand rupees for a mere hundred rupees?"

"Where is that horse?" asked the curious Ramoo. Dragging out a stout young man from their gang, the leader said, "This is that horse. The fact is, under a curse, he has been changed into a man. But it has been said that if a great soul buys him for a hundred rupees and treats him to a sumptuous dinner, then he would get back his horse-form at midnight."

Ramoo lost no time in handing over the money and marching back to his village with the

young man. Instead of going home first, he went to the solitary house in the fields. "Wait here," he told the young man and then went home and returned with his dinner which he offered to the young man and said, "Now that all the conditions are fulfilled, do not forget to turn horse at midnight."

"I will not, my master! But before I turn a horse, let me give you an advice: Never sleep with a horse in the same room."

"It is nice of you to say so. Since you are going to turn a horse, I think it would be better if you sleep outside," said Ramoo.

"Undoubtedly," said the young man as he bowed to Ramoo and left the room.

Early in the morning Ramoo came out to find the promised horse. When he did not find it, he scratched his head and told himself, "Once it turned horse, it lost its human memory and walked away. Pity! I should have kept it bound to the pillar!"

He went to Hari and reported the matter and said, "Brother, although I am richer by two profound advices, I don't think I can live with them. Better I don't separate from you."

"That is quite sensible of you!" said Hari and sighed.



THE CROW VERSUS THE COBRA



On the bank of a river bordering a forest stood a number of banian trees. In one of them lived a crow-couple, right from the time of their marriage. The male crow had been a great flier and he had seen many a village and town and had tasted the worms and frogs of many a land and river.

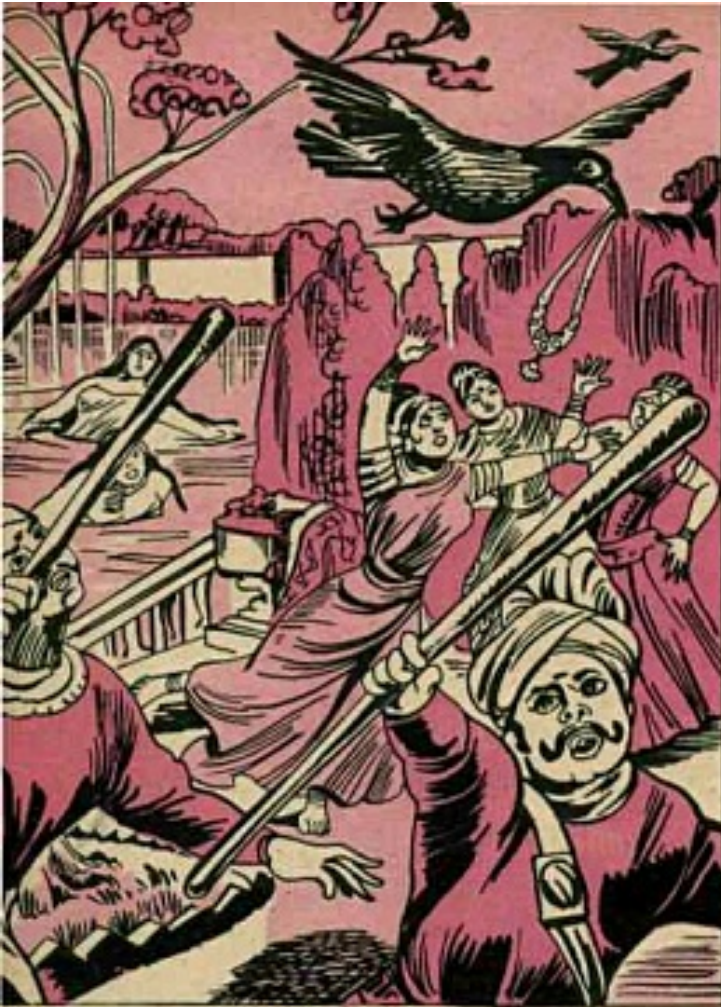
"Believe me," he often told his wife, "nowhere the breeze is so refreshing as it is here, nowhere the worms are so delicious as they are here." The female crow believed him all right and they had no mind to change their residence.

But, alas, no place on earth is all blessings! Not far from the banian tree lived a black cobra, with a pair of burning eyes. Its hissing chilled even the nerves of a tiger. When the female crow produced some eggs and began hatching them, the cobra one day crawled up to their nest and gobbled them up one after another. The couple of crows looked on helplessly, the female crowing out a most bitter note, but they did not dare even to come near, what to speak of checking the cobra from its murderous enterprise.

"Go and give a fight to the enemy!" cried the female crow.

"Be sensible. Even the giant ravens have never ventured to fight with a cobra," said the male crow.

"But I thought that you were



the bravest of crows!" moaned the female.

"You thought so, did you?" chuckled the male crow who felt very much flattered, "Well, well, you were not wrong. Time will prove that!"

"Cursed be your vanity. Look there. The cobra is swallowing yet another of my loving youngs!" cried the female crow.

"Peace. Do not despair. You can certainly give birth to a fresh lot of eggs, can't you?" the male crow tried to console her.

"To what avail?" answered the female irritably, "Will not

the cobra destroy them again? I will better go away and live with my parents."

The male crow was now really shaken. He said, mustering as much gravity as he could, "My dear wife! Have faith in my capacity. I promise to put an end to the cobra before you have produced the next batch of eggs."

This pacified the female crow. When the cobra left the tree scattering the cracked shells under the tree, they returned to their nest.

A few yards away, in a hole amidst a bush, lived an old jackal. He was considered a guardian of the small creatures of the locality. The male crow met him in the evening and reported his sorrows to him. The jackal closed his eyes and sat silent for a long time and then whispered some counsel into the crow's ear.

The crow departed gratefully.

Early in the morning he left his nest and circled over the nearest village. It was a day of a certain religious ceremony. The wife of the landlord, accompanied by her sister-in-law and maids, advanced towards the river for a holy dip. There was a special ghat with several



amenities reserved for them. Before entering the river they put off their heavy ornaments and kept them on a stool of stone, guarded by the maid servants. At a little distance stood some man-servants.

The crow which had followed them suddenly made a daring swoop and picking up a necklace flew away. At once the maid-servants raised a cry. The man-servants raised their sticks and chased the crow.

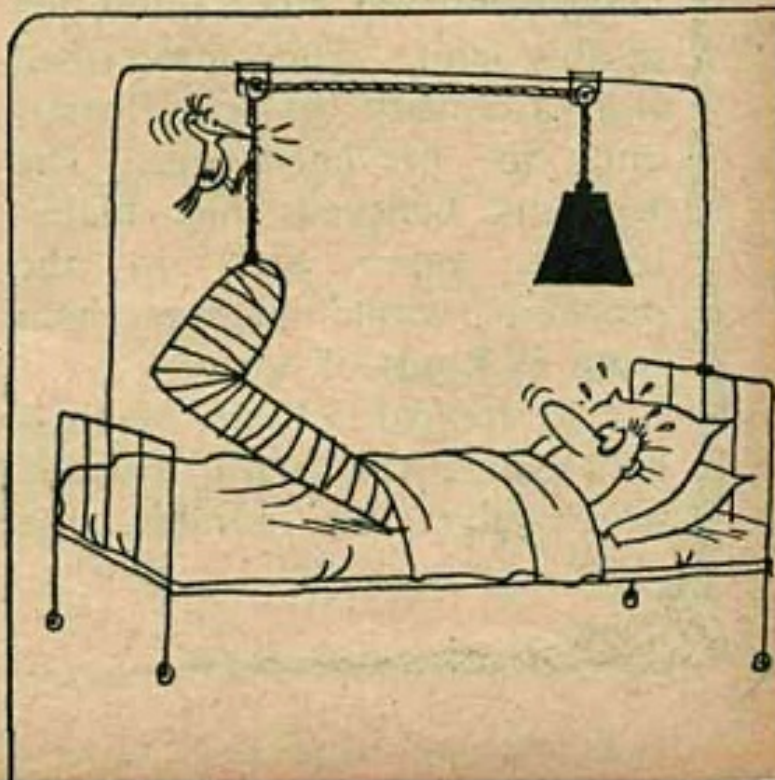
The crow flew neither too fast nor too slow. By and by he came near the cobra's hole. When he was sure that the servants had come sufficiently near to see what he was doing, he dropped the necklace into the hole and flew away.

As the servants approached the hole, their foot-steps irritated the cobra. It raised its head to see what the matter

was and was instantly clubbed to death.

The dead cobra was dragged away and the men searched on till they found the necklace.

As soon as they left the place, the crow called his wife to have a look at the cobra to her heart's content. Then both of them went to the guardian jackal carrying the present of a dry fish.





Ice Age

Cave men were probably the first people to gather blackberries, which have been there since the end of the last Ice Age. They are a hybrid fruit, descended from two entirely distinct species of the rose family which originally grew on different continents but were brought together by the melting ice.

Blackberries, growing wild all over the northern hemisphere, were appreciated by the ancients both as a food and as a medicine. Greek physicians were very much interested in this fruit. They prescribed it as a remedy for sore throats and to prevent gout. The Romans believed that blackberries, eaten early in the morning, would protect them from all kinds of poison.

The ancient settlers of England called the plant, bremel, which gives us bramble, the

name of the blackberry bush. But, by the Middle Ages, it had acquired many local country names. In some parts it was known as scaldberry, in the false belief that if children ate too freely of them they would suffer from a scalp disease called scald-head or scurf. Other names described the bushes and the way they rapidly spread over the ground. One was Bumblekite which meant to blunder about in a greedy, grasping manner. Another name was Wait-A-Bit because of the thorns which scratched the skin or caught at the clothing of people who went careless by their eagerness to reach the fruit.

There are over a hundred wild varieties of blackberry apart from those which have been cultivated. The fruit is so plentiful because the rose-like flowers of the bramble bloom

Survivors

LOOKING AT FRUITS

right through from June to October and have large supplies of nectar. This is stored just below the stamens which are easily accessible to all insects.

Each little ovary in the flower, and there may be twenty or more, becomes fleshy, juicy and sweet. They each contain a seed and clump together to form what is known as an aggregate fruit so that, despite its name, the blackberry is not a berry but a collection of drupes, or stone fruit.



GOD GUARDED HIS HOUSE!

It was raining cats and dogs and the river Jumna was in spate. Not a soul was to be seen on the river-bank near Rajpur, excepting a handsome young man who looked at the sky and looked at the fearful flood alternately.

But the young man did not hesitate for long. He plunged into the river and swum with valiant strides cutting through the currents. When he reached the opposite bank he was exhausted. Yet he did not care to take rest. He ran towards the village which could barely be seen through the thick down-pour.

He stopped at the rear of a thatched house and gently tapped on the door. A moment later the door was opened by a beautiful young lady. Looking at the young man from whose head water was still streaming down, she stopped short of giving out a shriek and asked, holding the door open for him to come in, "What made you rush here braving the storm, my husband?"

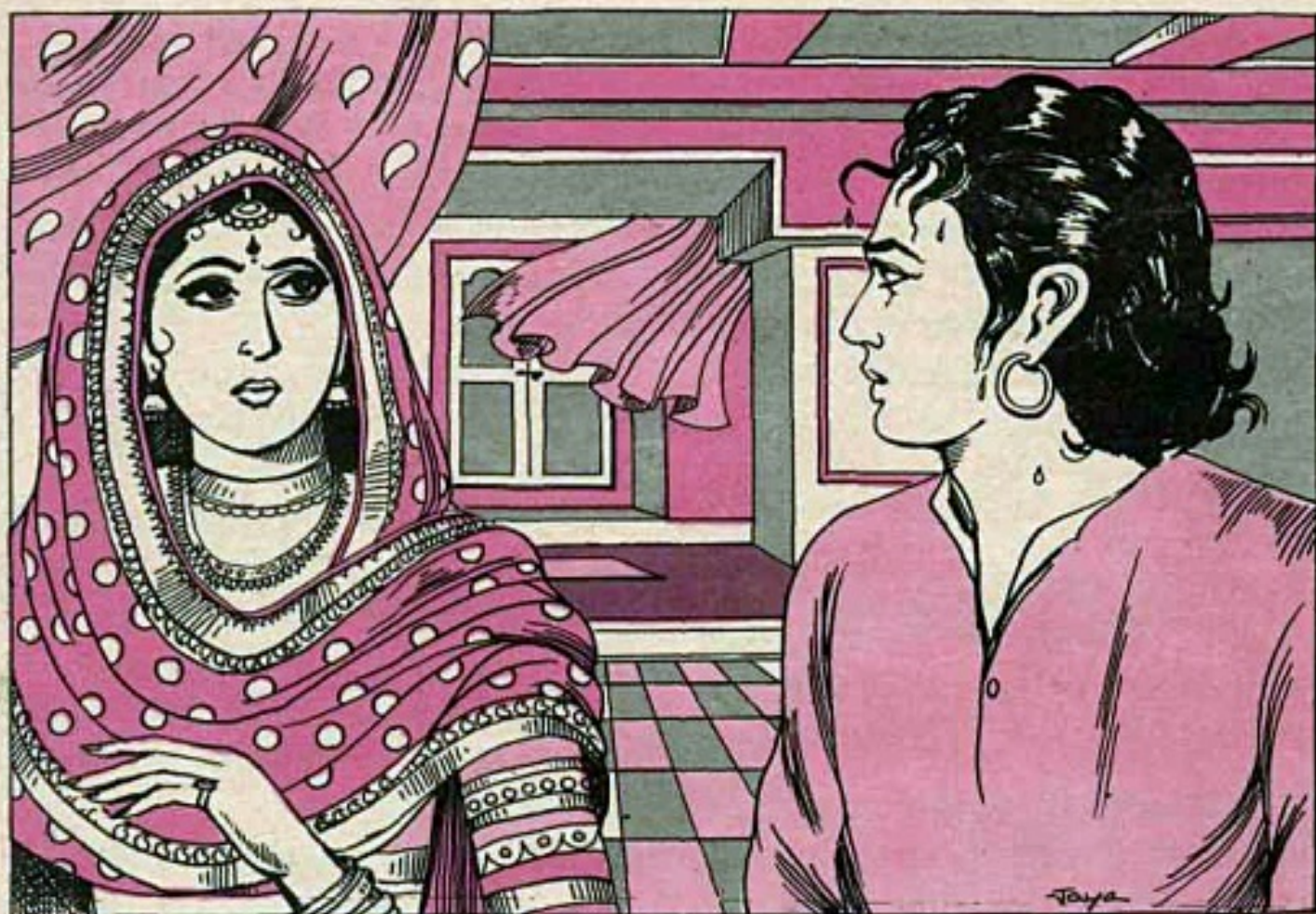
"I could not bear the separation from you any longer, Ratnavalli!" muttered the young man.

"What! I came here, to my parents' house, only this morning and it is not yet evening!" observed Ratnavalli.

The young man had no answer. He blushed and stood still, looking down.

"Pardon me, my husband, but to be so madly attached to a woman does not speak very high of you. You are a Brahmin, learned in scriptures. You should have realised that my beauty which fascinates you so much was skin-deep. Only if you directed a little of the great love you bear for me towards Lord Rama!"

There are moments when a single event or advice changes the course of one's life. Such a moment had come for the young Tulsidas. He remained dazed for long, tears rolling down his cheeks, remembering his childhood when he was determined to pursue the path of God-realisation. He had,



indeed, strayed too far, driven by worldly desires and youthful impulses.

That night he could hardly sleep a wink. He was on the road, a wandering mendicant, before it was dawn.

Tulsidas had lost his parents when very young. But he was a prodigy and had become a brilliant scholar while in his teens. Now as he moved from place to place as a pilgrim, people were charmed to hear him speak, explaining the riddles of life with great lucidity. But he attached no importance to his popularity. He had only

two passions: to realise God and to sing his glory through lyrics.

After much wandering he settled down at Benares for some time, deeply engrossed in his penance. There he realised the Grace of Rama through the auspices of Hanuman, the legendary devotee of Rama, a divine emanation himself.

Tulsidas emerged as a saint. He journeyed to Ayodhya, the seat of Rama. He had already composed a large number of devotional and philosophical poems. At Ayodhya he devoted his time to compose a new

version of the Ramayana, in Hindi. He completed it in 31 months and soon it became immensely popular. Famous as the *Sri Ramacharitamanasa* this epic of Tulsidas is read by innumerable people in the northern India to this day and is treated as a sacred work.

The *muth* in which Tulsidas lived had four doors and at night all the doors were left open. Whenever his disciples proposed to shut them, he answered, 'Not necessary!'

A thief entered the house one night. He made a nice bundle of whatever rice and coins he could lay his hand on. But preparing to leave the house, he faced a strange situation for which he was least prepared. He spent the night with great

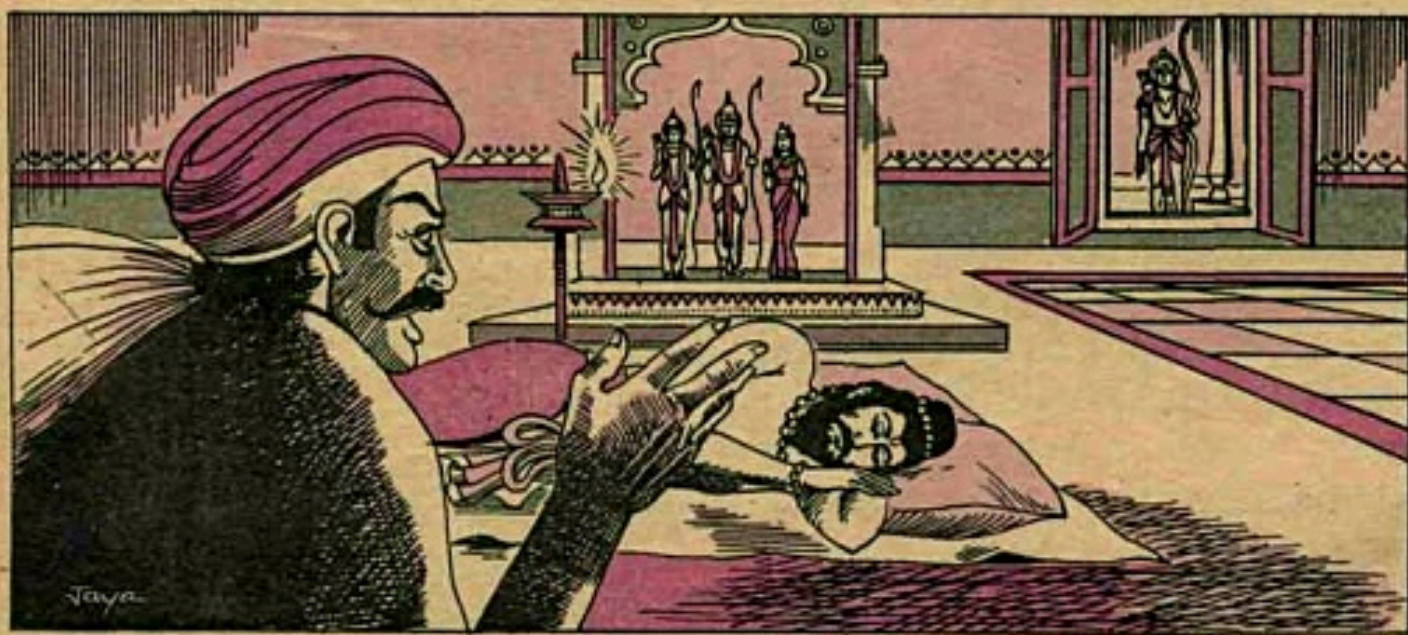
anxiety and fear of punishment.

Tulsidas woke up early in the morning. As soon as he came out of his room, the thief, trembling and crying, fell at his feet and confessed to his crime.

"But why did you not go away after stealing the things?" asked the saint.

"How could I, sir, when your house is guarded by that young man with the bow who is so alert that he is always there through whichever door I wish to escape?" replied the bewildered thief.

Tulsidas knelt down and, in tears, told Rama, "My lord, I knew that you protected me. My only hope is, it has not been any trouble to you to give the proof of your protection in this way!"





THE SIMPLETON'S LUCK

Janaki was a widow who lived in a village along with her son, Kishan. The widow had to labour hard to maintain herself and her son.

One day Janaki told Kishan, "Sonny! It is not good to idle away time. Better go and find out some job for yourself."

"Very well, mother, let me go out in search of a job. But should I not carry some breads to eat when I feel hungry?" said Kishan, who was a simpleton.

His mother gave him some breads. Kishan went out into the meadow and saw a small lake. He sat down under a tree and made good use of the breads. Then he enjoyed a hearty nap.

It was already evening when he woke up. His eyes fell on a chameleon, which, like all chameleons, nodded its head.

Kishan thought that the creature was asking him about the purpose of his visit.

"I want work," said Kishan bowing to the chameleon. The chameleon nodded again.

"You will give me job, is it? In that case I will begin to serve you from tomorrow," said Kishan and returned home. He told his mother that he had already succeeded in finding a job.

Next day Kishan went near the tree and asked the chameleon, "Now, what is my work?" The chameleon nodded.

"I understand. I should keep sitting and guard your hole, isn't that so? I will do as you please," said Kishan as he sat down.

Kishan continued to report for his work everyday. What he did in fact was to eat the breads he carried and to have

a good sleep. A month passed like that. "Where is your salary, sonny?" asked his mother.

"I will ask my master for it today," replied Kishan.

Next day Kishan met the chameleon after a little search and said, "Where is my salary, master?"

The chameleon nodded. "I understand. You will pay it tomorrow, isn't that so?" said Kishan and, back at home, told his mother that he was to receive his salary the very next day. His mother had no reason to disbelieve him.

And Kishan did not forget to ask the chameleon when he reached near the tree, "Have you arranged for my salary?"

But all he received was a further nod from the chameleon. That at last made Kishan doubt his master's motive. He picked up a stone and hurled it at the

creature. It slipped into a hole instantly.

But Kishan was not to give up. He fetched a spade and began digging there in a bid to find his master and to realise his dues.

He did not find the chameleon, but his spade soon struck a buried jar full of gold coins.

"Oh, this is where lies my master's wealth. But how much should I take?" Kishan brooded over the problem and then remembered that once when he had asked the chameleon about his salary the creature had nodded twice. He now concluded that he was to pick up two gold coins.

Thereafter Kishan continued in his job and collected two gold coins every month as his salary. That was enough to maintain himself and his old mother comfortably.





THE HISTORIAN'S SURVEY

King Purandar of Mahendragiri was not only a sound administrator, but also a great patron of art and literature. Seldom a day passed without some scholar, musician, artist or poet being rewarded by him.

One day a renowned historian, Shrikantha, visited his court. He was a man of great experience and learning. He had chosen the profession of writing histories of various countries. He visited a country, stayed there for a year, wrote its history and received a reward from the king of the country. In this way he had already covered fourteen countries before coming to Mahendragiri.

King Purandar received the historian affectionately and said, "You are welcome to enjoy my hospitality and write a history of my country. Whatever

assistance you need will be put at your disposal."

"Thank you, O King," said the historian and then he told the king privately, "if you allow me to conduct myself as your friend and confidant, my work will be easy."

The king had no objection to this. The historian lived in the palace and accompanied the king whenever the latter went out on a hunting expedition or for supervision of any work in his country. The king loved him for his wisdom and goodwill. Soon all the people in the country understood that the historian had become a close friend of the king. The officers and the traders showed him great respect. He passed his time discussing issues or chatting with them.

When a year was about to



pass, the historian told the king, "My lord, I have almost completed writing the history of your country. I intend to hand it over to you soon."

"Is it?" asked the King, "Can't I have a look at your manuscript as it is?"

"Why not!" said the historian and presented his manuscript to the king.

The king spent a good deal of time perusing the history which was indeed very well-written. The historian had given an authentic account of the origin and the development of the kingdom and had praised the people as innocent, the king as noble, and the officers as faith-

ful. But at one place he had said, "Unfortunately, the rich traders of Mahendragiri were unworthy of this good country. They were dishonest and vain."

The king, surprised, called the historian and said, "My friend! How did you make such an observation about the traders? I don't think that your impression is correct."

"If my impression is not correct, my lord, I will have no hesitation to change the passage. But let me try to prove that I am not incorrect," said the historian.

Next day the historian met the top traders of the capital,

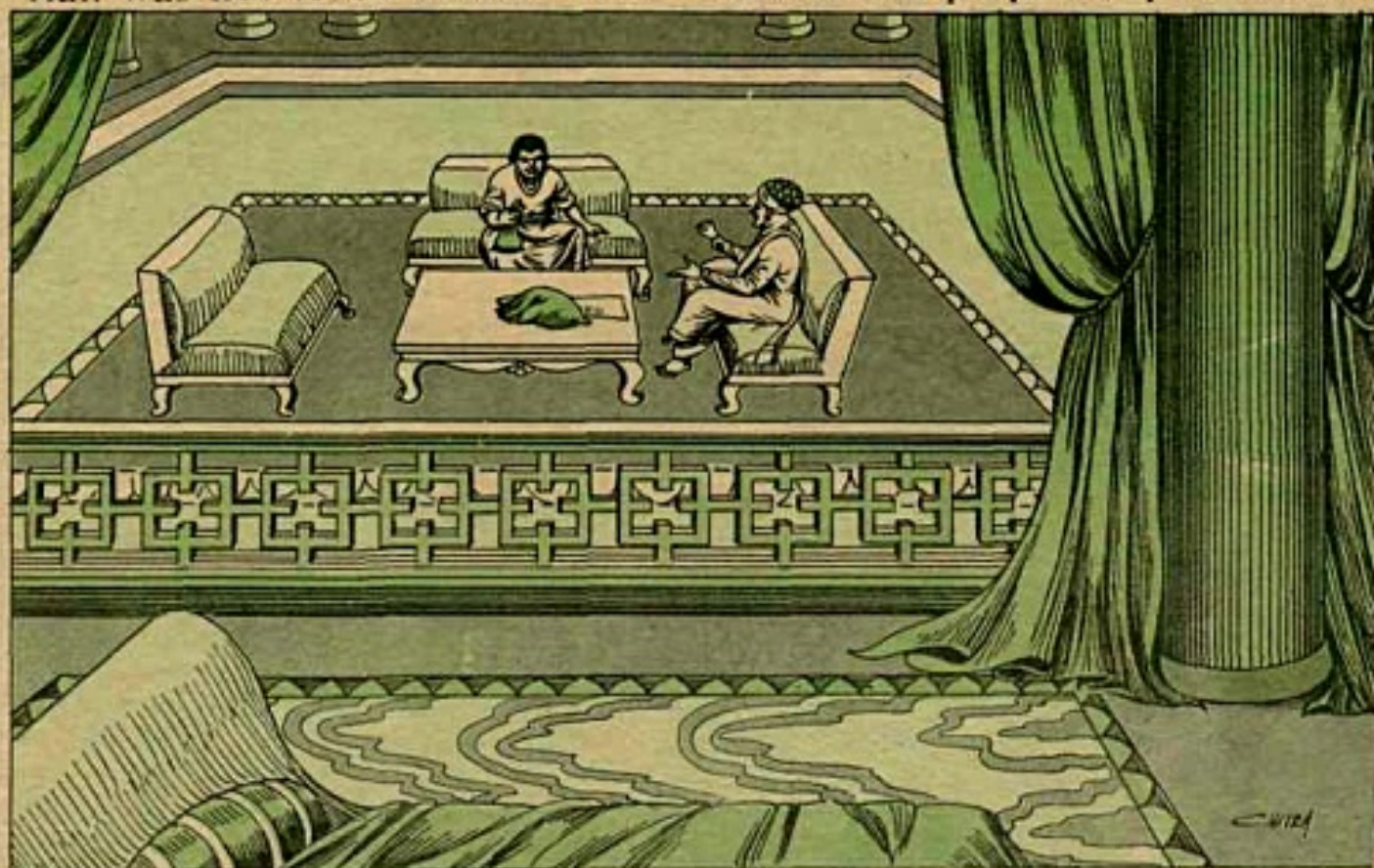
one after another, and said, "The king desires to send as present a boxful of most valuable jewels to the emperor. Can you give me the finest jewels you have? You will be paid for the goods which the king would retain."

The traders, who were too eager to please the historian, for, he was the king's best friend, handed over to him some of their costliest jewels. The historian made each one of them write down the number and description of the jewels he gave and made him put down his signature below the list.

The next morning the historian was not to be found. His

personal servant whispered to others that he had left the country. It did not take long for the news to spread. By the time the king came to the court, already a number of traders were waiting for him. They complained in one voice, "Save us O king, otherwise we are reduced to poverty. Your friend, the historian, has escaped after swindling us." Then they narrated all that had happened.

The king was shocked. But a man with a big heart that he was, he assured the traders that they would be compensated for their losses and asked his minister to prepare separate lists



of the jewels each trader gave to the historian.

By mid-day the lists were prepared. It was found that the whole royal treasury would be empty if the cost of the jewels were to be paid to the traders. Looking at the account the king became very much pensive.

Just then the historian made his appearance in the court. The king's face brightened up.

The historian smiled and asked, "Why are our good friends, the greatest traders of the country, have gathered here?"

The traders hung their heads. The historian kept down a bag he was carrying on his back and said, "My lord! All the jewels I collected are here. Each packet contains a signed list of the jewels each trader

gave me. You may now return the properties to their owners."

The king, who had now got some scent of the historian's motive in enacting such a drama wanted to compare the original lists with the fresh lists the traders had dictated to the minister. At that the traders fell at his feet and confessed that they had highly exaggerated their claims.

The king did not excuse them. Each one was fined according to the degree of his exaggeration, before the jewels were returned to them.

"Your observation was quite true!" The king told the historian with a sigh.

Completing his work, the historian left for another country, with a heavy reward from King Purandar.





UNDER THE VEIL

A poor farmer was on the way to his field. Suddenly he saw a bead of pearl lying on the sand. He picked it up and hurried to show it to a certain goldsmith in the town.

The goldsmith examined the pearl and said, "This is a precious pearl. I am prepared to pay five hundred rupees for this."

The farmer's surprise and joy knew no bound. He happily agreed to sell it. The goldsmith paid him five hundred rupees and kept the pearl.

The farmer expressed his gratefulness to the goldsmith and then left for his village.

As soon as he had crossed the town and came to a meadow, two persons jumped upon him from the nearby bushes and

snatched away the money he was carrying. The poor man shed tears and returned to the town and went and reported the matter to the administrator of the city.

The administrator was surprised to learn that the goldsmith paid five hundred rupees for the pearl. It is true that a precious bead of pearl might fetch that high price, but a goldsmith would naturally like to buy it at a lesser price—more so when the seller was only an ignorant farmer. If the goldsmith would pay the maximum price himself, what profit would he get by selling it to his customer? Who would pay him more than five hundred rupees for a bead of pearl?

The administrator decided to

test the goldsmith's honesty before planning to trap the thieves. He asked the farmer to meet him after four days.

Next day the administrator put on the dress of a clerk and appearing before the goldsmith, said, "I come from a distant village. Our zamindar wants a bead of pearl to set on a ring. It is rather urgent. Do you know anybody selling pearls in your town? It has to be of good quality."

The goldsmith showed him the pearl he had purchased from the farmer and said, "You will hardly come across a pearl of this quality. I bought it yesterday for five hundred rupees. I am willing to give it away for six hundred rupees."

The administrator saw that the goldsmith did not speak any lie. However, he decided

to buy the pearl. He paid six hundred rupees and took the pearl and left the shop.

It was just evening. As soon as the disguised administrator came out of the town and approached the meadows two thieves suddenly jumped upon him and took away the pearl.

But the administrator had already anticipated this. His sepoy's were hiding nearby. They rushed out and captured the thieves.

The thieves had put on veils on their faces. When the veils were removed, whose faces should emerge but the goldsmith's and his servant's!

"I thought so!" said the administrator, "You are a thief under the veil of honesty!"

Needless to say, the culprits were jailed and the farmer could get back his money.





VEER HANUMAN

Sugriva had no doubt in his mind that Hanuman was the most capable of all his lieutenants: So, he called Hanuman to his side and told him:

“O great hero, Hanuman! You can conquer earth, air, water as well as the sky. There is hardly a forest, hill or ocean unfamiliar to you. You can be as speedy as the wind. There is none on earth who could rival you in strength. No wonder that I set store by you about the discovery of Sita Devi.”

Rama who heard Sugriva's words could realise how much Sugriva depended on Hanuman for the success of the mission. Naturally, he too looked upon Hanuman as an able instrument. He handed over to Hanuman

his ring with his name embossed on it and said, “O hero of heroes! Show this ring to Sita when you find her and that would dispel whatever doubt she might have. This should make her sure that you were my emissary. I feel that it is you who would bring us the success we desire!”

Hanuman accepted the ring and prostrated himself to Rama. When he was about to leave, Rama told him again, “Hear me carefully, O Hanuman, I depend on you. Do not neglect to do your very best.”

The Vanaras scattered in all directions soon thereafter. They were all given a month's time.

After the search parties had been duly despatched, Rama



and discussed their courses of action for the next day. But in vain did they labour. A month was about to pass and they were nowhere near success. Those who had gone in the directions of east, west and north, returned to Sugriva who sat on Mount Prastravana near Rama and Lakshmana and reported their failure.

But Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva did not give up hope, for, the party that had gone south was yet to return. From what they had gathered, they had concluded that Ravana had proceeded southward with Sita.

In the meanwhile the party of Hanuman reached the region of Vidyachala. That was a vast province marked by innumerable hills, forests and rivers. The forests abounded in sweet fruits. The Vanaras made good use of them while continuing their search for Sita Devi.

On their way they came across an area which was like a desert. The rivers had dried up there. Not a single bird or animal could be seen. What to speak of any tree, even a blade of grass was not found alive.

Once upon a time a great rishi, Kanduk, lived there. He

and Lakshmana rested in a cave on Mount Prastravana, looking forward to their return.

The party to the east was led by Vinata, to the west by Sushena. A third party went northward. Hanuman, Tar, Angada were included in the party that marched in the southern direction.

Sugriva was happy that he had now discharged the first part of his duty.

Each of the search parties did all they could for tracing Sita Devi. River or lake or forest or hill—they spared no place. After the day's search they spent the nights together

had much spiritual powers. At the same time he was very much short-tempered. He had a son of sixteen years who died all on a sudden in the forest. That angered the rishi to such a degree that he uttered a terrible curse and reduced the forest to a desert.

The Vanaras did not spare that deserted area from their thorough search.

As they advanced farther, they entered a deep forest. There they encountered a ferocious demon. The demon yelled at the Vanaras, "Come on, you puny creatures, let me gulp you leisurely! Do not try to run away. That will be in vain. Surely, it is the god of death who has despatched you to me!"

Angada thought that this demon could very well be Ravana. In the twinkling of an eye he struck the demon a hard blow. And that was enough to finish the demon.

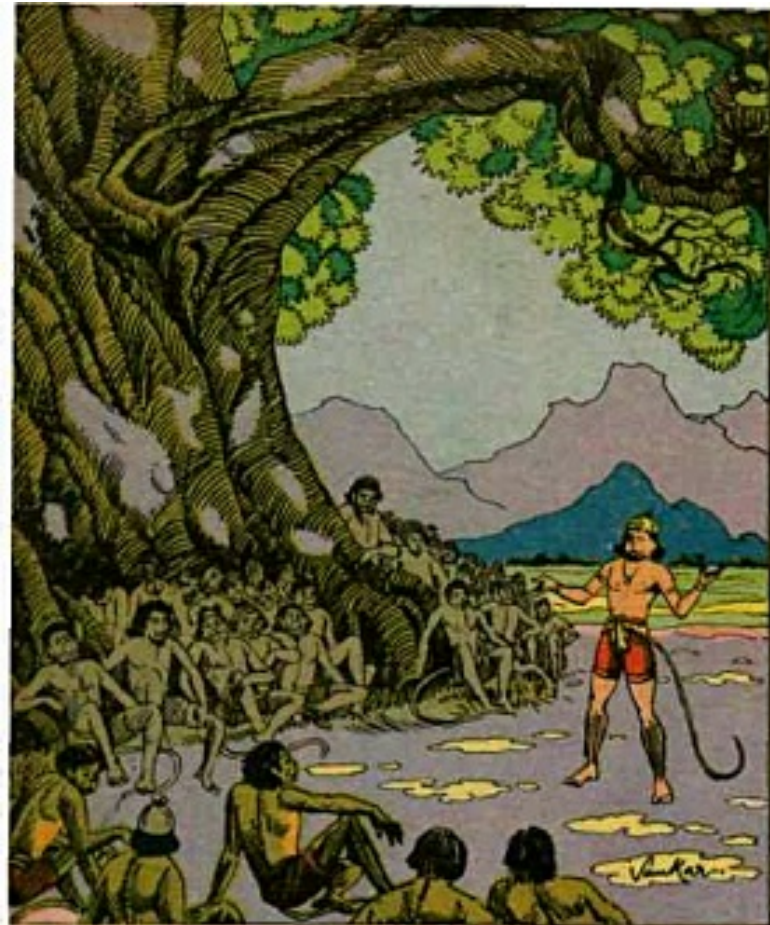
The elated Vanaras, under the impression that they had been able to kill Ravana, searched for Sita Devi in the caves nearby. They made a thorough search of the forest too. But Sita Devi was not to be found.

Disheartened, the tired Vanaras sat down under a tree.



Angada told them: "For long we searched the forest, the hills, the rivers and the caves. We have left no stone unturned. Yet we succeeded in getting neither Sita Devi nor Ravana. Sugriva is a ruthless task-master. Before we are obliged to report our failure to him, it would be proper for us to make yet another effort to find out Sita Devi. Hence, friends, we must give up relaxing now."

Gandhamadan spoke in support of Angada's observation. Accordingly they scattered once more throughout Vidyachala and resumed their search.



The wide province of Vidyalachala was thoroughly explored by them. As they were doing so, the time allotted by Sugriva was coming to an end. That made them work desperately.

The most determined group of them, including Hanuman, Gaja, Gabaksha, Gabaya, Sharava, Maind, Dwividha, Sushena, Jambavan, Nala, Angada and Tar suddenly came across a hitherto unknown place with a tunnel.

The mouth of this tunnel, once dug by Maya, had become covered by creepers and bushes, so much so that it appeared almost inaccessible.

The Vanaras were tired and hungry. Over that they were awfully thirsty. They had looked for water everywhere but without any result.

Now they saw that from inside the tunnel came out flying a number of herons, geese and such other birds who generally resided near water.

Surprised and hopeful, the Vanaras approached the mouth of the tunnel.

Hanuman, who knew more about places than anyone else, said:

"Looking at these birds as well as the prolific growth of these creepers it appears certain that there is water inside this tunnel. We cannot do anything without first quenching our thirst. Let us go in and find the water. Then we will devote our strength to a further search."

The Vanaras were ready to act according to Hanuman's advice. As they entered the cave, they found it quite dark. They did not know where the passage led. However, as they advanced a little, they saw the place lighting up. Soon they arrived at a charming spot, marked by a variety of choice trees abounding in flowers and

fruits. They were amazed to see a pond in which golden lotuses bloomed and golden fish played.

On the bank of the pond stood a magnificent palace, studded with jewels.

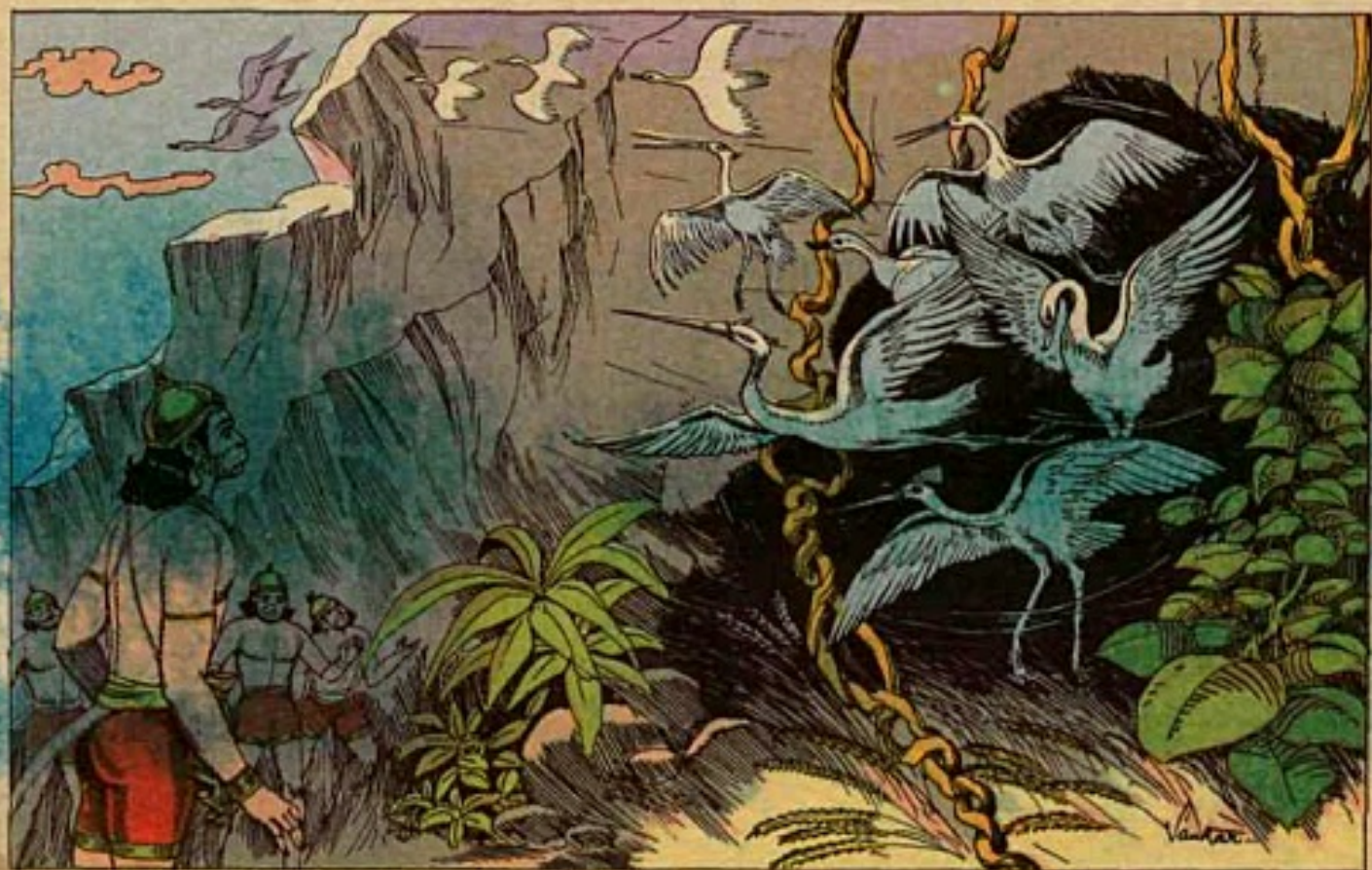
Looking here and there the Vanaras found utensils of costly metals filled with valuable stuffs such as honey, sandalwood paste, incense etc. Also there were several other marks of affluence all around.

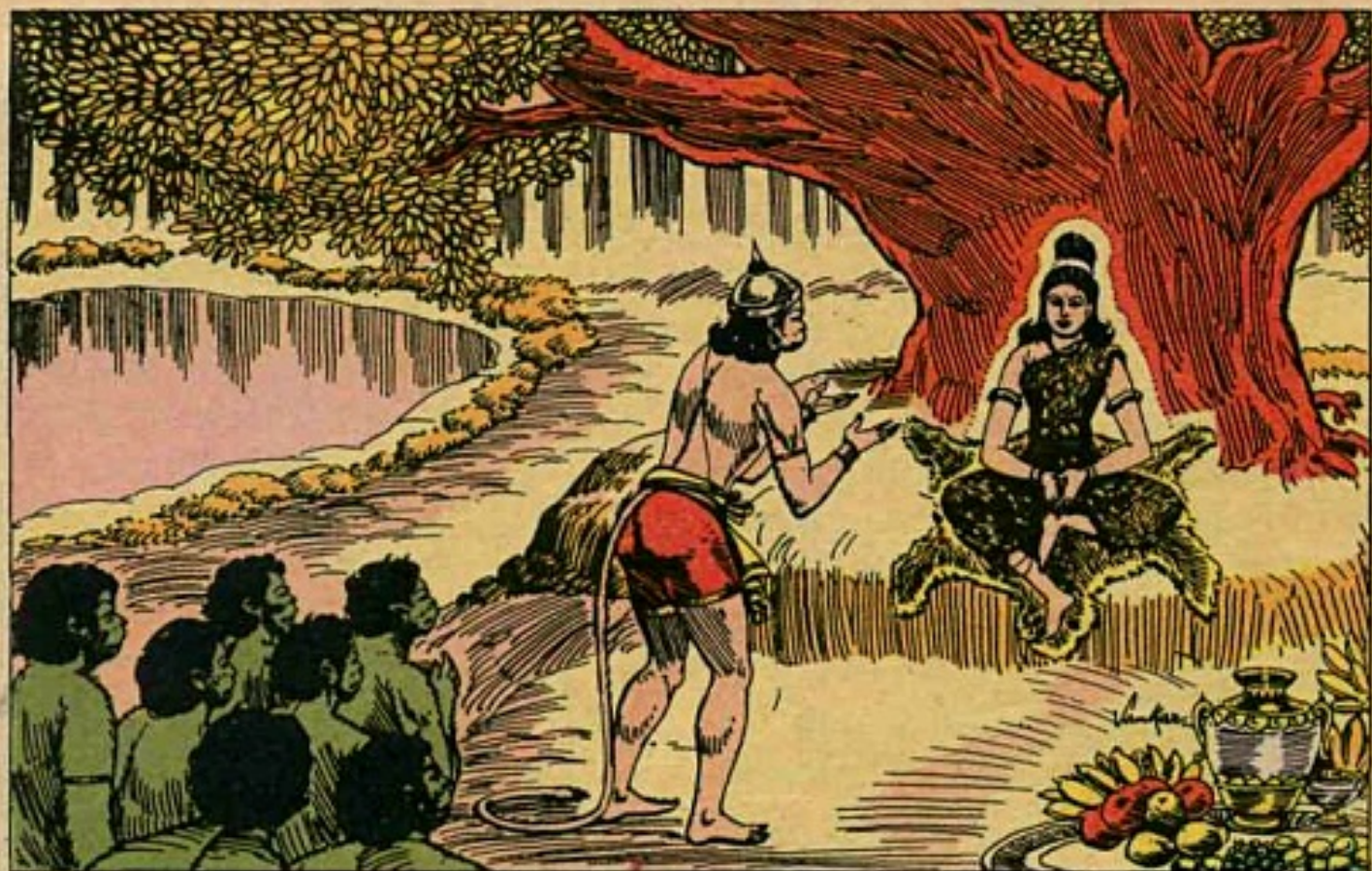
Wandering in that region, the Vanaras soon saw a woman, clad in deer-skin, seated in meditation. She looked resplendent yet holy.

Hanuman went near her, greeted her with folded hands and asked, "Mother, who art thou and whose is this tunnel?" Then he introduced himself and his companions and said again, "We had walked far and had worked hard. We were hungry and thirsty. In search of water and food we entered this tunnel. But what we see here bewilders us. We can't understand how lotuses and fish of gold could be possible. It seems to be a house of miracles. Will you kindly tell us the history of this strange tunnel?"

The woman answered:

"This tunnel had been dug,





long ago, by a powerful demon named Maya. He was the architect of the realm of demons. The strange things you see here have been possible by his magic. He had pleased Brahma by his penance and had received immense wealth from the god. Maya was living here with a heavenly nymph named Hema. The god Indra, angry with him, destroyed him by his thunder. After Maya's death Brahma gave this property to Hema. I am Hema's friend, Swayamprabha, daughter of Meru Savarni. I stay here on Hema's behalf, taking care of her propriety. Hema is not only

adept in music and dance, but also she possesses great powers. She has given me the boon so that none can ever harm me. Now, tell me, what is your mission? What made you visit this region? But before answering my questions, feel free to eat from these trees and drink from the pond and relax for a while."

After the Vanaras had satisfied their hunger and thirst and had relaxed, Hanuman told Swayamprabha all about the purpose of their expedition and concluded, "We are deeply grateful to you, for you saved us from certain death by star-



vation. In what way can we return your kindness?"

"You need not think of returning anything. I am happy to have been of some little service to you," replied Swayamprabha.

"Please tell us how to go out of the tunnel so that we can continue our search for Sita Devi. The time granted to us is already over and we must soon report to our king," said

Hanuman.

"I will lead you out of the tunnel by my supernatural power. Close your eyes," instructed Swayamprabha.

The Vanaras closed their eyes. In the next moment they found themselves standing out of the tunnel, flanked by a mountain and a sea.

"I wish you success," said Swayamprabha as she re-entered the tunnel.

WHAT IS A WALKING LEAF?

This is the name given to a weird insect which looks like a leaf; it is known to science as *Phyllium* which means little leaf. There are very many species of this insect to be found in India, Australia and South America. So closely does it resemble a leaf that an insect is not easily spotted. When one falls from a tree, it looks to be a leaf spiralling to the ground.



THE ANGRY AND THE COMPASSIONATE

One morning, according to the discipline which Buddha had prescribed for the monks, he was out to collect alms from the house-holders, himself.

He saw a big house, surrounded by an orchard, inside a prosperous village. He approached the gate and asked the fat man who was strolling inside the garden for some alms.

The fat man bounced at him angrily and shouted, "You are one of those good-for-nothing monks of Buddha, are you? You fellows deserve not alms, but whips!"

Buddha kept quite,

Infuriated at his silence, the man shouted even more fiercely, "You fellows are trying to destroy our society with your irresponsible ideas! You should be flogged and thrown at the mouth of hungry beasts. Wretched creatures!"

Buddha still kept quite. Surprised, the man demanded, "Why are you silent? Why don't you answer me back?"

Buddha smiled and asked, "Suppose I offer you a fruit and you do not accept it. Where does the fruit go?"

"Well, it remains with you, of course!" replied the man.

"Exactly. I have not accepted the rebukes you offered me. Needless to say, they remain with you. I have nothing to answer!" said Buddha as he turned to move away.

The man stood struck dumb for a moment. Then, in a flash, it occurred to him that he who remained untouched by his harsh words and yet could answer with such calm wit and wisdom, could not have been an ordinary man. He ran up to him and fell at his feet.

The compassionate Buddha lifted him up and wiped his tears of repentance.





A QUESTION OF NATURE

Sumanta was a young man who lived in a small hut in a lovely corner of a village. He always did good to others. Even his enemies were not deprived of his kindness.

One afternoon a rogue, who had heard about Sumanta's greatness, came to his hut and pretended to be tired and hungry. Sumanta at once did everything to make him comfortable and in a few minutes produced several plates of delicious food before him.

The rogue, while putting the food to their proper use, wondered how Sumanta could manage to cook the items in such a short time. After he had finished eating, he asked Sumanta, "Sir, isn't it strange that you could entertain me to so many dishes in such a short time?"

"Yes, it is natural for you to take it as something strange. The mystery is, I have a magic pot with me. It instantly produces whatever I desire from it," replied Sumanta.

The rogue's curiosity was great. He said, "Sir, will you not be pleased to show the magic pot once to me?"

Sumanta brought out the pot and putting it upside down, said, "Let there be a bunch of bananas!" He then lifted the pot up and, lo and behold! a bunch of bananas was found lying before them.

Now, the rogue's only thought was how to take hold of the magic pot. He dreamt of turning a millionaire by the blessing of the pot.

At the earliest opportunity he scampered off with the pot. But to his great disappointment,

the pot did not respond to any of his appeals.

The thief returned to Sumanta and placing the pot before him, said, "Pardon me, sir, I had carried away your pot by sheer mistake."

Sumanta did not seem angry. He smiled and asked his pot for several food items which the pot immediately produced. He entertained the rogue with them.

But the rogue could not suppress his curiosity. He asked, "Tell me, sir, how is it that the pot did not give me even a handful of rice when I asked it for it?"

"The answer is simple! The pot would not work with any-

body else as long as I am alive!" replied Sumanta.

Instantly the rogue decided to put an end to Sumanta's life so that the pot would work according to his wish. He went away and returned in the evening with some sweetmeats. He offered them to Sumanta and said, "Sir, you have been very much kind to me. Please accept this gift from me in return."

Without any hesitation Sumanta ate the sweetmeats while the rogue looked on.

The rogue departed, only to return at midnight. He was sure that Sumanta had died in the meanwhile, for, he had



mixed a deadly kind of poison with the sweetmeats.

He entered the hut and picked up the pot. But he stumbled against something and that woke up Sumanta.

"Who is it?" asked Sumanta.

"What is this? How is it that you are still alive?" fumbled out the rogue in great bewilderment.

"Why? What made you think that I should not be alive?" asked Sumanta calmly.

The rogue confessed, "Sir, the sweetmeats you ate contained poison. That is why I thought that you must have already died!"

"I can digest poison. That is a capacity I have earned through the practice of yoga," said Sumanta.

"Sir, a cursed fellow that I

am, I desired to possess the pot killing you so that the pot would work according to my wishes. But it was not to be!" said the rogue.

"That is your bad luck. I cannot help it! Never mind. Tell me, would you like to eat anything?" asked Sumanta.

The rogue, awfully ashamed, said, "Sir, I have been extremely treacherous in my conduct towards you. Still you continue to be kind to me. This really puzzles me."

"There is nothing puzzling in it. To do good is in my nature. To do wrong to others is in your nature. If you are not prepared to change your nature why should I change mine?" Sumanta said and laughed.

The rogue stood still, lowering his head.





The Bridegroom's Family Tree.

An inn-keeper had two wives. His first wife had died, leaving a beautiful daughter named Vimla behind.

After the inn-keeper's death, his second wife ran the inn. Since the inn was situated just at the entrance into the town, people who came from far relaxed there and bought their meals from her. The woman made a good profit, but she did not care to employ a servant. Poor Vimla had to work hard, cooking, washing the dishes and cleaning the floor.

Vimla grew up to become a charming bride. But her step-mother never thought of giving her away in marriage, for that would oblige her to employ a

servant!

When the neighbours suggested that Vimla should be married off, the woman replied, "The problem is, I have nobody in the world excepting Vimla. I cannot live without her. He who would marry Vimla must agree to take me as dowry along with her and to maintain me for all my life."

Although many young men desired to marry Vimla, none of them came forward to propose since the condition her step-mother made was a most unwelcome one. Everybody knew that she was a quarrelsome and selfish woman. It was far better to go without any dowry than to have her as the dowry.

One afternoon while the woman was talking to some other women of the neighbourhood, a young man named Ramdas who visited the inn from time to time on his way to the town on business, approached her and said, "I am in search of a good bride for myself. Do you know any?"

The woman replied in a careless manner, "How do I know? I have hardly any time to go out of the inn!"

But the other women immediately intervened, "Why do you say so? Don't you have an excellent bride in your house itself?"

"But it is not that simple to marry Vimla!" replied the woman in a huff.

"Why, what is the problem?" queried Ramdas.

"Well, it is like this," said the woman looking askance at the young man, "he who would marry her must take me as dowry!"

"I should say, that is a blessing!" said Ramdas, "If I get a guardian like you, I will be happy."

All the other women pressed upon Vimla's step-mother to accept the young man's proposal.

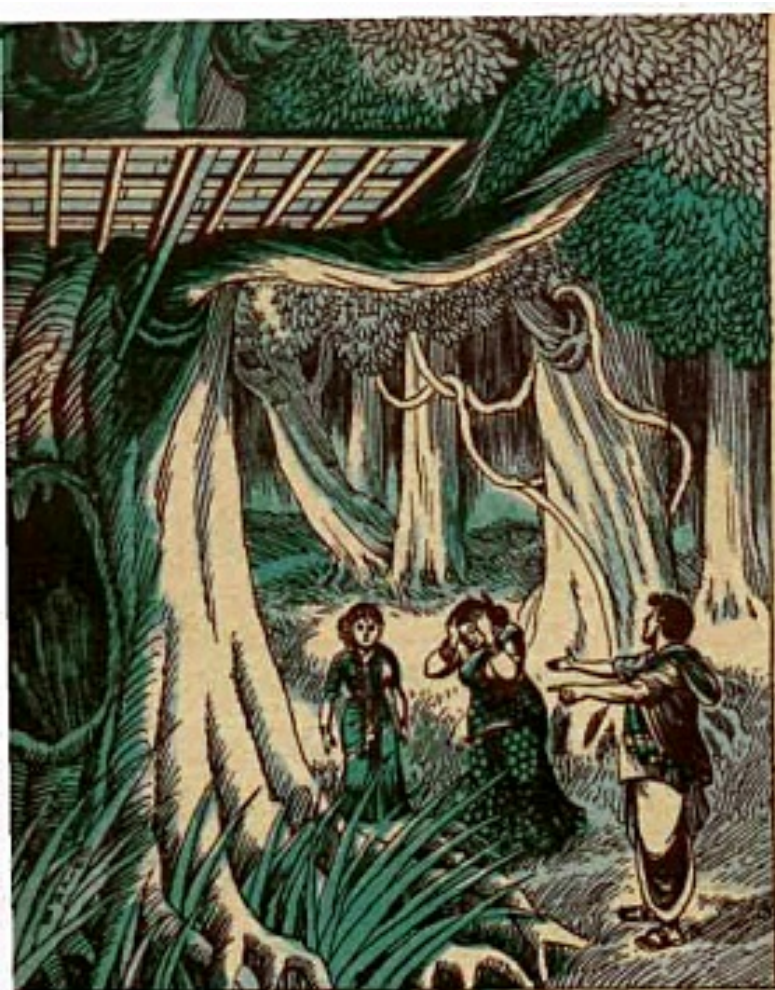


"But I must know about your family-tree before I agree to the proposal!" said the woman.

"My family-tree is great. What use my describing it? You can see for yourself when you accompany me," replied Ramdas.

After this, despite the woman's reluctance, the neighbouring women arranged for Vimla's marriage with Ramdas.

After the marriage was duly performed, Ramdas desired to leave for his home along with Vimla and her step-mother. The step-mother put on all her ornaments, carried all the



money she had accumulated in a box, locked up the inn and followed the couple.

They walked till evening. The woman was extremely tired. She asked, "How far is your home? Instead of any village, I see a forest ahead!"

"We are about to reach my home," replied Ramdas as they entered the forest. They soon stood before a big banyan tree and Ramdas said, "At last we have arrived. This is my home. You wanted to know about my family-tree, didn't you? Have a close look at it. Isn't it really great?"

"What!" shrieked the

woman. By family-tree I meant your ancestry, of course!"

"Oh, I didn't understand that. However, this is all I have to show you," said Ramdas gleefully.

The woman cursed him and cursed herself and wailed. Vimla, however, did not utter a single word.

Evening was fast approaching. Some howls and roars were heard from distance. The woman's only concern was how to pass the night. She looked up at the machan on the tree and said, "Now, help me to climb up there so that I am not dragged away by any beast."

"It is not possible for a fat person like you to go up there. Better squeeze into this hollow of the tree and pass the night," Ramdas advised her.

The woman, with great difficulty, still wailing, somehow managed to enter the hollow. She muttered to herself, "I don't care what happens to Vimla. I will go back to my inn as soon as it is dawn."

Sleep came to her only towards the last part of the night. But suddenly she felt something touching her. Opening her eyes, she saw a bear trying to haul her out of the hollow.



She gave out a piercing shriek and fainted.

When she opened her eyes, she saw Ramdas standing before her. "Why did you shriek?" Ramdas asked.

"Why shriek, eh? Are you not ashamed at leaving me amidst bears and tigers and what not? Now, show me the way out of the forest. I want to depart immediately," replied the woman.

"How can I allow you to depart? Did you not say that

you have come as dowry with Vimla?" said Ramdas, laughing.

The woman looked pale. She took out one after another her ornaments and made Vimla wear them. Ramdas then left her outside the forest.

Thereafter Ramdas led Vimla to his real house on the hill. It was a nice house and Vimla soon understood that her husband was a hunter. Looking at a bear-skin, she also understood the mystery of the bear scaring her step-mother.

WHAT IS AN ATOLL?

An atoll is a low reef forming an island which encloses a lagoon; it is generally ring-shaped, but some are open at one end like a horseshoe. Atolls are mainly of sand and coral, and coconut palms grow on most. Groups of the little islands are to be found in the Pacific, and there is a stretch covering 4,000 miles in the South-West.



FUN WITH SCIENCE

DANCING MOTHBALLS

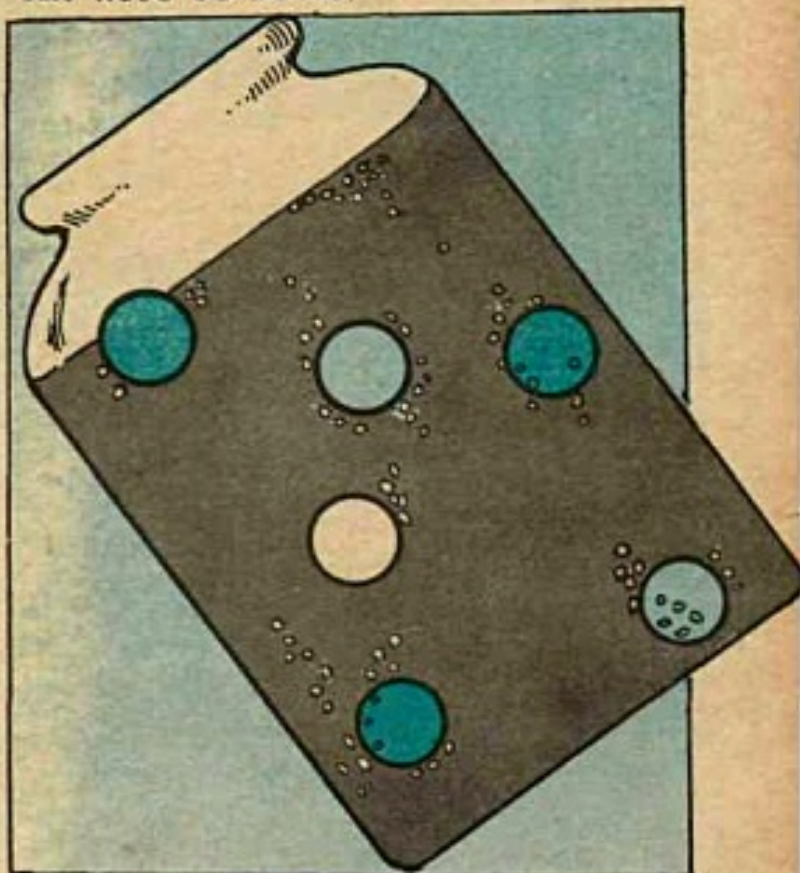
MOTHBALLS gaily coloured with ordinary wax crayons can be made to dance in a tall jar of water. Pour some diluted hydrochloric acid (obtainable at chemists) into the water and a heaped teaspoonful of bicarbonate of soda.

Immediately drop the mothballs into the fizzing water. To begin with the balls will sink. But soon their rough surface will become coated with carbon dioxide gas bubbles by the reaction between the dissolved chemicals.

The layers of silvery bubbles will lift the mothballs and they will rise gracefully to the surface. On breaking surface the balls will bob about and lose some of their bubbles. Loss of buoyancy will cause the mothballs to sink again.

Underwater the balls will acquire

more bubbles and then recommence their stately drift to the top of the jar. They will continue to rise and fall for an hour or more before new chemicals need be added.



SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES

